

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9630

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 0543

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH, CH

SUBJECT: DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER'S TRIP TO CHINA

REF: A. BANGKOK 229; B. VIENTIANE 8721

1. DURING A JANUARY 4 DISCUSSION OF DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER CHARTCHAI CHUNHAWAN'S RECENT VISIT TO PEKING WITH A MEMBER OF CHARTCHAI'S DELEGATION, AN EMBASSY OFFICER LEARNED THAT THE THAI MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA) CONSIDERS THE VISIT OF LITTLE PRACTICAL VALUE. THE MFA OFFICIAL SUMMED UP THE DELEGATION'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY COMMENTING THAT "IT WAS A SUCCESSFUL GOODWILL MISSION, BUT LITTLE OF SUBSTANCE WAS DISCUSSED WITH THE CHINESE."

2. AS PART OF THE GOODWILL, THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AGREED TO SELL THAILAND 50,000 TONS OF REFINED DIESEL OIL WHICH, ACCORDING TO THE MFA OFFICIAL, REPRESENTS A SEVEN DAY SUPPLY AT THAILAND'S CURRENT RATE OF CONSUMPTION. THE MFA OFFICIAL DID NOT DISCLOSE THE PRICE BUT ADDED THAT THE CHINESE WERE DELIVERING THE AMOUNT AT BELOW CURRENT MARKET PRICES. THERE WERE NO AGREEMENTS REACHED FOR THE SALE OF CRUDE OIL TO THAILAND. THE FINAL CONTRACT FOR THE DELIVERY OF THE 50,000 TONS WILL BE SIGNED WITH CHINA RESOURCES CORPORATION OFFICIALS IN HONG KONG.

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3. THE NEXT THAI GROUP SCHEDULED TO GO TO THE PRC WILL BE A

MEDICAL DELEGATION THAT WILL INCLUDE THAI PHYSICIANS PLUS ONE OR TWO MFA REPRESENTATIVES. ON THE CHINESE SIDE, PRC OFFICIALS INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD BE WILLING TO SEND A TRADE DELEGATION TO THAILAND IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THE MFA OFFICIAL DID NOT DISCLOSE WHO WOULD LEAD THE CHINESE DELEGATION OR SPECIFIC DATES FOR THE VISIT.

4. CHARTCHAI'S DELEGATION DID NOT RAISE WITH THE CHINESE THE QUESTION OF CHINESE SUPPORT OF THAI INSURGENTS AND CLANDESTINE RADIO BROADCASTS OF THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE OF THAILAND (VOPT). ACCORDING THE MFA OFFICIAL, CHARTCHAI INSTRUCTED ALL MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION TO AVOID THESE ISSUES UNLESS THE CHINESE MENTIONED THEM FIRST. CHARTCHAI REASONED THAT THE CHINESE ARE FULLY AWARE OF THE THAI GOVERNMENT'S WISHES AND, THEREFORE, IT WAS UNNECESSARY TO INTRODUCE THESE NEGATIVE FACTORS INTO THE CONVERSATIONS. NEITHER THE INSURGENCY NOR VOPT BROADCASTS WERE DISCUSSED.

5. COMMENT: GIVEN CHARTCHAI'S PENCHANT FOR EXAGGERATION AND TAKING CREDIT FOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR WHICH HE IS NOT RESPONSIBLE, WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED TO DISCOVER HIM TRUMPETING THE RECENT PRC REMOVAL OF HEAVY AAA WEAPONS FROM PRC-BUILT ROADS IN NORTHWEST LAOS (REF B) AS HIS ACCOMPLISHMENT. CHARTCHAI COULD CLAIM THAT THESE UNILATERAL CHINESE ACTIONS ARE AN INDICATION OF IMPROVED PRC-THAI RELATIONS RESULTING FROM HIS VISIT. AS MENTIONED IN REF A, CHARTCHAI IS A MAN IN SEARCH OF A ROLE FOR HIMSELF.
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